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ABSTRACT

Four papers, focusing on hallmarks for success, which were given at the November 1985 Annual Conference of the Council on International Educational Exchange are presented. All discuss study abroad and set a context for successful institutional programming. An introduction by Paula Spier discusses the movement in American higher education to address its lack of information about the developing world by increasing opportunities for American students to have experiences in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as part of their academic degree programs. The four papers are as follows: (1) "Hallmarks of Successful Programs in the Developing World: The University of California" (William H. Allaway); (2) "Hallmarks of Successful Programs in the Developing World: The University of Wisconsin's College Year in India Program" (Joseph W. Elder); (3) "Hallmarks of Successful Programs in the Developing World: Academic Programs in Universities in Sub-Saharan Africa for Undergraduates" (Joe K. Fugate); and (4) "Hallmarks of Successful Programs in the Developing World: The Great Lakes Colleges Association Latin American Program" (Diane K. Snell). An afterword, by John G. Sommer, encourages study abroad as an experience of discovery of the world, one's own cultural roots, and one's self. (SM)

CIE OCCASIONAL PAPERS

on International Educational Exchange

No. 22

Forum Series

Hallmarks of Successful Programs in the Developing World

William H. Allaway
Joseph W. Elder
Joe K. Fugate
Diane K. Snell

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Hallmarks of Successful Programs in the Developing World

William H. Allaway
Joseph W. Elder
Joe K. Fugate
Diane K. Snell

Introduction by Paula Spier
Afterword by John G. Sommer

March 1987

Preface

It is timely and appropriate that with this issue the Council on International Educational Exchange is resuming the publication of its Occasional Papers Series. Since 1977 when the last of twenty-one issues was published, both the Council and the entire field of international education have experienced significant growth and development in terms of scope, widened priorities, and contribution to education in the U.S. That in 1987, the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Council, this issue focuses on educational exchanges with the developing world well reflects important aspects of this growth and development.

The Council's Board of Directors is grateful to the persons contributing to this issue and especially to Sterling and Maryélise Lamet, the new co-editors of the Occasional Papers Series. This and future issues should fulfill an important role in the dissemination of provocative thinking and experience in the field of international educational exchange.

Barbara B. Burn

Director, International Programs
University of Massachusetts
Chairman, Board of Directors
Council on International
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Paula Spier
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Introduction

A strong movement in American higher education is trying to address this country's lack of information about the developing world by increasing opportunities for American students to have experiences in Africa, Asia and Latin America as part of their academic degree programs. We feel a responsibility to help produce citizens with more awareness of global concerns. Besides, Western Europe is expensive, and already has more American students than it can absorb—our enlightened self-interest suggests that we look for new learning resources.

This has been supported at the national level by the Council on International Educational Exchange, the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, and the Liaison Group for International Educational Exchange, which have worked together to increase awareness, seek appropriate methods for broader educational programming, and begin to look for ways to fund these endeavors.

The four papers which follow were presented at the November, 1985 Annual Conference of the Council on International Educational Exchange. The authors represent four of the most respected and durable academic programs in the developing world. They themselves are personally responsible for much of the success of these efforts.

One of the things that is fascinating about a series of papers titled "Hallmarks for Success" is how little agreement there is among experts about details of academic programming in the developing world. They differ on such things as length of stay, levels of preparation, styles of leadership, appropriate housing, and whether students should do as much or as little as possible within the normal structure of a host university.

They do, however, agree about the institutional policies which contribute to successful functioning. Some of these, of course, are essential to any effective overseas programming; they become absolutely critical for institutions planning study abroad in the third world. Each implements these policies in different ways; they probably set them in varying orders of priority. If one were to generalize from the four papers, I think the advice might come out something like this:

Build yourself a strong base:

All four writers mention a multi-institutional support system. Two act as consortium agents; one for a state-wide university system; the fourth in informal cooperation with a large number of other colleges and universities. The time may come when our individual campuses can produce enough students for an efficiently managed program in the developing world; it is not yet here. We need to learn how to work together, how to balance our ability to cooperate and build trust against our needs for autonomy and control.

Know what you're getting into:

None of these efforts just happened. They were built on institutional strengths, they involved on-site visits, knowledge of local situations, time for relationships to develop. They were started by individuals with high energy levels, prepared to do endless and frustrating detail work. In each case there was a high level of pre-existing knowledge about the culture, politics, economics and academic systems of the host country, continuously supplemented by additional exchanges and on-site visits. Final programs were designed to take particular advantage of the special resources in the selected country.

Build the strongest possible linkages with host universities:

In spite of the fact that four very different educational styles are described, all consider their programs to be founded on a profound belief in the need for cooperation and reciprocity. The effective implementation of this ethical position results in stronger educational benefits for

American institutions and their students. Our own faculty learn and pass their learning on; our hosts see opportunities for themselves and provide more for us. Together we learn more about ways to teach, do research, and manage exchanges.

Be prepared to be flexible:

These programs all grew and developed. University relationships were modified; courses, student support systems and learning styles were altered. The widest possible range of pre-departure and on-site choices were presented to students.

Set your standards high and stick to them:

On the other hand, we know a good deal about what we're doing. The writers believe firmly that careful student selection and intensive orientation are essential. They feel that language learning is a key to understanding culture. They do everything in their power to prevent the formation of American "islands".

Make it feasible for your students:

In this critical time of program planning, we need to support and encourage our students (and their parents) as they select options and while they are abroad. They need to know that it will not cost them much more than a similar period at home; that credits earned will apply to their American degrees; that someone at home and abroad knows they are real live people with genuine needs.

Help them learn the things that will be most important to them and to the world:

Students are, of course, going for academic credit, and it is our responsibility to see to it that those they earn are justified. In most cases, programs in the developing world are also chosen at least in part for general education and personal reasons. Indeed, much of our own desire to have more students in these critical areas is because we think those reasons are important. We need to design our offering so these kinds of learning can take place—in and out of the classroom. The authors talk about directed field studies, experiential learning, language learning, family stays, dormitory living, friendships, values.

In summary, then, these four papers set a context for successful programming. Those of us seeking expanded opportunities for our students will find it helpful to consider our institutional needs and resources in such a context.

Paper One

William H. Allaway,
Director, Education Abroad Program
University of California

Hallmarks of Successful Programs in the Developing World: The University of California

In over twenty years of relationship between the Education Abroad Program of the University of California and universities in the developing world, certain hallmarks have evolved for success in developing opportunities for American students to study abroad. Most of this experience has been in providing a program for a full academic year, although each of the following hallmarks are equally applicable to shorter term programs:

1. The program should be based in a host university and, where possible, utilize the regular curriculum of the university.
2. The program should include reciprocal exchange activities.
3. The program should be directed by a faculty member of the home or sending university.
4. Student selection and orientation should be handled with care.
5. Where relevant, the program should emphasize language acquisition.
6. Where feasible, the program should include an experiential component.

Hallmark 1:

Although it may not be possible to meet specific academic objectives for an American student group through placing the students in a university in a particular host country, the advantages of providing direct access to the culture through normal contacts with students and faculty of a host university seem obvious. A center apart from a university setting to some extent must represent an artificial environment.

Integration of American students into regular university courses not only gives those students an opportunity to interact directly with other students on academic terms, but also provides a comparative dimension to some of the courses, at least through bringing in the American experience. Where it is not possible to meet specific course needs of American students in the host university, it is usually feasible to add a special course paid for by the American university to supplement the regular curriculum. Sharing in small discussion groups or in laboratory work with regular students of the host university paves the way for activities and friendships outside the classroom.

Many times access to the university means access to dormitories and student restaurants, which means involvement in the mainstream of student life. It is through these daily contacts with fellow students that some of the richest aspects of the exchange experience evolve, including invitations to visit in homes during holiday periods.

In short, integration into a host university provides students with a sense of direct participation in the culture and strengthens the ability to escape from the cocoon of foreigners which can present such a problem when American students are traveling, living, and studying as a distinct group. One major caveat to this overall approach has to be made. Taking places in a university in the developing world affects the ability of that university to take in its home students. Thus, ways must be found to compensate for this utilization of valuable university resources. This leads, of course, to the second hallmark.

Hallmark 2:

The International Committee for the Study of Educational Exchange recognized both the importance and the difficulties involved in developing reciprocal exchange programs between universities in the industrialized nations and universities in developing nations in a statement adopted in August, 1985: "Serious problems and difficulties arise when the exchanges are

between countries and institutions within the North and South, between the rich industrialized countries and less well endowed developing countries, or between countries of different political and ideological systems. In such asymmetrical relationships, exact reciprocity is well nigh impossible. A different kind of relationship, based on overall mutuality of interests and a qualitative sharing of resources other than simple arithmetical reciprocity, as well as a clear awareness of the differences involved, must be sought if such exchanges are to be successful and acceptable to the participants at either end. Here, the imbalance in human and other resources, especially financial and physical facilities, may well prove to be overwhelming barriers to any meaningful international exchange and cooperation unless the institutions concerned make imaginative and innovative efforts to overcome these constraints.

The Education Abroad Program has found that two types of reciprocal activity are regarded as very advantageous by a host university in a developing country. The first is a teaching contribution to the regular curriculum of the host university by a UC faculty member serving as Director of the program. The second is to provide opportunities for junior faculty of the host university to work toward the Ph.D. degree in the University of California with a waiver of all fees. While neither replaces the spaces taken up by UC students in undergraduate courses directly, each is viewed by the host university as a contribution which offsets the resources made available to University of California students. The important thing is that the relationship be a partnership rather than exploitative in nature.

Hallmark 3:

As mentioned above, one of the purposes of having a faculty member from the home institution responsible for a group of students being sent to a university in a developing country may be for the teaching contribution he/she may make to the host university. This, however, is an ancillary purpose, a fringe benefit, if you will.

One of the primary purposes in having a faculty member representing the home university is the academic advisement of the students, assisting in the articulation of academic work overseas with the curriculum of the home university. This involves identifying appropriate courses and providing information on the content of the courses for use in establishing the basis for academic credit when the students return home. This is a particularly important role in programs where American students remain enrolled in their home university and receive credit directly for work done abroad. The faculty member would also normally be responsible for translating the grading system of the host university into some equivalent of the home grading system.

Another important function for a faculty member is to assist the students in becoming aware of many aspects of the cross-cultural experience and assist in making the adjustment to another culture. This may take the form of developing an orientation program, developing language courses, setting up field trips, or hosting social events where their students can meet faculty and students of the host university informally. This, of course, means that the faculty member should have had previous experience in the host country or region of the world in order to base orientation activities on a firsthand knowledge of the local scene. Personal counseling is often an important part of the faculty member's role in facilitating the adjustment process.

In the case of reciprocal programs, the advising of students of the host university who would like to study in the United States can become a time-consuming but important part of the faculty member's responsibilities. Many talented students in universities in developing countries seek opportunities to study abroad, particularly in fields where they are unable to pursue advanced work at their home university. Knowledge of admission requirements and academic resources becomes a crucial factor in making the maximum contribution through the advising process.

Thus, it is seen that faculty involvement in study abroad programs in the developing world not only contributes to the effectiveness of the experience of the students involved in the program, but contributes to a real sense of partnership between the two universities.

Hallmark 4:

One of the major ways to assure the success of a student exchange relationship is through the careful selection of the student participants. Starting with evidence of a strong academic background, a second major factor in the selection process should be the examination of the student's motivation for wanting to study in a developing country, preferably through interviews with faculty and students familiar with the country or region of the world.

University of California experience with this aspect of the selection process has demonstrated that students who had previously had such an experience are uniquely qualified to spot the students who should or should not be afforded the same opportunity. They bring a deep insight into the problems to be faced in the situation and the type of motivation which will serve a student well if he/she is to have a successful experience. Many times students are motivated by unrealistic goals or a romantic vision of the environment which make it unlikely that the student's goals will be met. If students have done their homework and have a realistic view of the problems confronting students in the host university, they stand a much better chance of profiting from the experience.

Once selected, orientation—both pre-departure and post-arrival—becomes vital to the success of the exchange experience. Some institutions may create a special course to prepare students for the experience through an introduction to the region of the world and the host culture. Others may require or encourage taking area studies courses which serve much the same purpose but in a less direct fashion. Another approach to orientation is through a combination of a reading list and a one or two day program in which faculty and students familiar with the region and the host university share their experiences with the students, including the academic experience, cultural cues, health tips, and relations with fellow students of the host university.

Upon arrival, it is important that the orientation process be continued, because inevitably predeparture orientation has about it an air of unreality. Once on the scene, the need for practical information increases the attention span of students to the orientation effort. At this point, a combination of language study, where relevant, lectures, and visits to local points of interest can help to introduce the students to their new environment in a meaningful way. It would appear axiomatic that the greater the cultural distance between the home and host culture, the greater the need for a coherent and comprehensive orientation program.

Two things might be noted with regard to orientation and programs that are reciprocal. The first is that students of the host university who have studied at the home university are often willing to play an important role in welcoming the incoming students and contributing to their orientation. Conversely, as host university students prepare to study in the U.S., American students can be of a great deal of assistance in providing their predeparture orientation.

Hallmark 5:

Language study with regard to exchange programs in developing countries may become a very complex issue in that the language of the local culture may not be the language of instruction in the university, and yet both may be foreign to an American. Thus, students wishing to study in Togo will need French to carry out studies in the University of Benin and a local language to carry on informal conversations in the market or with families with which they may wish to become acquainted. Language acquisition, whether predeparture or after arrival, thus becomes an important factor in determining the type of experience the student is able to have.

While special courses in English can solve the problem of a second language in the regular courses of the host university, this presents the obvious problem of separating the students from the students of the host university. Thus, in this instance, a strong language prerequisite should be established as part of the selection process. In the case of the host university using English as the language of instruction, such as the University in Nairobi it is still desirable for the students to have some instruction in Kiswahili, even though it is not offered in the university. This is the point

where a special course needs to be organized by the program to provide students with the linguistic tools needed to become familiar with the host culture.

In another situation, a program may be based in a university which gives instruction in the local language which cannot be readily acquired in advance by the students. In this instance, it would seem appropriate to develop special courses in English while providing the opportunity for the intensive acquisition of the local language.

All of the above makes the fundamental assumption that an objective of educational exchange is to understand the host culture and that the language of that culture is the key to understanding it. Without the capacity to communicate with people in their own tongue, integration—or even adaptation—becomes very difficult. Providing this key to understanding is the responsibility of any program that wants to be successful.

Hallmark 6:

Educational exchange programs vary widely with regard to the extent to which there is an emphasis on the experiential as opposed to the academic emphasis in the program. In some, the academic may totally dominate, in other the experiential may be the sole purpose. Some middle ground would appear to provide the most balanced approach to understanding another culture. The University of California has worked out a study and field experience model for an eleven-week period which begins with a five-week period of language study and a contemporary civilization course on the host country. The second five weeks is spent in a village attached to a school or hospital or some other social agency, learning about village life and contributing as students are able to the agency to which they are attached. Living with a family contributes a great deal to their understanding of the local culture. A detailed diary becomes a paper for the contemporary civilization course, which meets again in the eleventh week for a report of the experiences of the participants.

In an academic year program it may be more difficult to introduce an experiential component, but some effort should be made during long vacations to assist students in having a different kind of experience that will bring them into direct contact with life outside of the urban centers of the country in which they are studying. In some countries, contact with local Peace Corps volunteers has opened the doors to new experiences. Students tend to be creative in becoming acquainted with another culture. Encourage it!

Conclusion:

There are many considerations in developing a successful educational exchange program between an American university and a university in a developing country. This paper touches on just a few of the considerations the author feels to be of greatest significance. The essence of a successful program lies in making it a real partnership, with each university contributing as it is best able. Such a partnership engenders goodwill and contributes much to the successful experience of each of the individuals involved in the exchanges.

Paper Two

Joseph W. Elder
Professor, Sociology and South Asian Studies
University of Wisconsin—Madison

Hallmarks of Successful Programs in the Developing World: The University of Wisconsin's College Year in India Program

The Founding of the University of Wisconsin's College Year in India Program:

When the University of Wisconsin launched its College Year in India Program in 1961, we assumed we could readily transfer the year-abroad-in-Europe model to India. The first year of our Program in India proved how wrong we were. We expected the five students we sent to Delhi University to live in student dormitories, take special Hindi language lessons, and enroll in several English-medium university courses. Within weeks of the students' arrival, the Hindi language lessons had been canceled by mutual student-teacher consent, since the instructor selected for the task had no idea how to teach Hindi as a second language. Each student had been dismayed by the Indian classroom experience. When classes met, irregularly and somewhat unpredictably, professors often arrived with no notes or apparent forethought as to lecture topic, lectures followed no discernible sequence, student in-class questions were actively discouraged, and learning focused on preparing for a distant, externally-administered examination. (Our Wisconsin students didn't realize that, in classical India, ability to expound on any topic with no advance notice was a sign of vast learning, whereas the use of notes was a sign of uncertainty. Nor did our students realize that, in the British-Indian academic system, on doesn't "take a course," one "reads for an examination-paper" for which nothing counts but the marks one receives on a single final examination designed and graded by external examiners.) Furthermore, the imposed restrictions of Indian dormitory life generated near-rebellions by the Wisconsin students—especially the Wisconsin women. And health, including diseases like dysentery and hepatitis was a constant problem. By the time the academic year ended, the five Wisconsin students were unanimous in their assessment that the Program was a virtual disaster, even though India remained a fascinating country in which to live and learn for an academic year.

The Re-Crafting of the College Year in India Program:

Over the next dozen years we experimented with a variety of strategies to meet the challenges India posed for the typical year-abroad-in-Europe model. The task was to discover the various fits between what the Indian academic scene could provide and what American students could accomplish to earn one year of credit toward their bachelors' degrees. In the end, we devised a three-component program:

A Second-Year Course in an Indian Language (Hindi-Urdu, Telugu, Tamil): Unlike the year-in-Europe programs that can require a minimum of two or even three years of French or German or Spanish before students study in France or Germany or Spain, the Year-in-India Program cannot require any minimum of an Indian language before students are selected to the Program, inasmuch as most campuses in the U.S. offer no Indian languages. However, the Program does require all students selected to the Program to complete the equivalent of one year of Elementary Hindi-Urdu, Telugu, or Tamil before they depart for overseas (something they can readily accomplish by enrolling in Wisconsin's Intensive Elementary India language courses during summer school).

During their academic year in India, students are required to complete a second year of their Indian language. Each university with which Wisconsin is affiliated in India (Banaras Hindu University in Varanasi, Andhra University in Waltair, and Madurai Kamaraj University in Madurai) offers certificate/diploma courses in the language of their region. All Wisconsin students are required to enroll in these courses as one of their three Program components.

A Tutorial Course: Although the Wisconsin students discovered that most regular university classes for which they enrolled were unsatisfactory, they also discovered that, if they arranged a tutorial with a professor, the educational experience could be both positive and instructive. The same professor who may be uninspiring and unfocused when delivering classroom lectures can "come to life" in a one-to-one tutorial situation. The tutorial course also enables students to study under qualified tutors who are not on the university faculty, for example musicians, dancers, painters, and craftspersons.

A Fieldwork Project: Every student is required to conduct the necessary research to produce a 60-100 page independent-study report. The student completes the investigative research and final writing under the supervision of a local advisor—often, but not always, a university professor. In most instances the fieldwork project requires the student to gather the data off-campus and to do much, if not all, the data gathering through the local Indian language. Topics of the fieldwork projects have included village ethnographies, the contemporary practice of traditional medicine, various economic development programs, women politicians, inter-caste conflicts, patterns of death and dying, temple architecture, biographies, and translations of local proverbs and folktales.

At the end of the overseas year, the three components of the academic work are matched with appropriate course titles and numbers from University of Wisconsin departments (with liberal use of the 699 course titled "Directed Study"). The final course matching appears on a University of Wisconsin transcript. Most students receive a total of 34 semester credits for the work they complete during the summer in Madison and the academic year in India (a resident Wisconsin student typically receives between 30 and 32 credits during an academic year on the Madison campus).

Elements that have Contributed to the Program's Success:

A Ten-Week Intensive-Language and Orientation Program in Wisconsin the Summer Preceding the Year in India. The fact that students selected for the Program must come to Madison, Wisconsin to take intensive-language training during the summer has been converted from a necessity into a virtue. The ten weeks permit:

1. A mutual "looking-over" process. No screening procedure has yet been discovered to enable the Program to select only those students who will thrive during an academic year in India. Grade-point averages, letters of reference, and personal interviews may help, but in the end the Program has only a superficial knowledge of the student (and, similarly, the student has only a dim notion of the details of the Program). The summer together permits each to learn more about the other. It is a rare summer in which at least one student does not "self-select out" of the Program, as its rigorous demands became more apparent. And, once in a great while, by the end of the summer the Program requires a student to drop out—usually for extraordinarily poor performance in the language course.

2. The building of students' support networks. "Culture shock" and loneliness are two of the major problems students face when they reach India. The fact that students arrive in India accompanied by friends they have acquired during ten weeks of intensive language training provides them with a first-line of defense against the traumas of both "culture shock" and loneliness.

3. General, location-specific, and gender-specific orientation. The ten summer weeks enable the Program to provide detailed orientation materials for each student. Along with an immunization regimen and general orientation sessions that include over a dozen documentary films and discussions on such topics as "Health Care in India" and "How to do a Fieldwork Project," the Program provides specific orientation sessions on "Being a Woman in India" and "Research Possibilities in Varanasi/Waltair/Madurai." For each separate location students receive maps and site reports that describe local academic, health, shopping and eating facilities, and they see slide shows and photographs of student alumni who have returned from their particular location. We are satisfied that the ten-week orientation program helps make up for the difficulty of adequately screening student participants and contributes significantly to the very low drop-out rate once the students arrive in India.

Graduate-Student "Monitors" on Each Campus in India. A 1972 Government of India regulation that no foreign academic program in India is permitted to have a foreign director ended Wisconsin's ten-year-old practice of sending an American professor to oversee the Program in India. Instead of appointing one professor, the Program now sends three graduate-student "monitors," one to each of the three India campuses. The "monitor" her/himself is enrolled in a certificate/diploma course in the Indian university. Much of the daily success of the Wisconsin Program rests on the shoulders of the three "monitors." Each "monitor" is responsible for the funds assigned to that campus and provides periodic accounting for those funds to the University. Each "monitor" serves as a cultural mediator between the Indian university and the Wisconsin students. Each "monitor" is responsible for the health care of the students. And each "monitor" serves as a counselor for the students. The fact that each "monitor" is in virtually daily contact with each student on her/his campus permits much closer awareness of the students' needs and problems than was possible under the former system, when an American professor lived in Delhi and paid only periodic visits to each campus.

Continual Up-Grading of Language Instruction. In the early years of the Program, students were frequently frustrated by the language instruction they received in India. On one hand, the language was being spoken all around them; so there were many "language teachers." On the other hand, the Indian universities' certificate/diploma course language instruction was often uninspiring. In many instances, useful language texts did not exist. Often homework was not required. And teachers rarely had received training in how to teach Hindi-Urdu/Telugu/Tamil as a second language. Over the years the language-teaching situation in India has gradually improved. In some instances the Program has hired particularly gifted language tutors to supplement the classroom instruction offered by the Indian university. Language teachers in both India and Wisconsin have prepared quality language materials specifically oriented to students' needs (e.g., dialogues in which a student explains a fieldwork project to a professor, a student arranges to rent a room, a women student confronts a college boy who has heckled her, etc.). And language faculty members from each Indian campus have traveled to Wisconsin to participate in the summer language program and to learn modern techniques of second-language instruction.

Personalization and Individualization of the Program Requirements. One of the factors that has contributed much to the success of Wisconsin's College Year in India Program has been the wide range of discretionary choices left to each individual student. In fact, the range of choices is so broad that students have sometimes described the year in India as more of a "Resource" than a "Program." Aside from their mandatory second-year language study in India, students are free to choose their tutorial topic, their tutor, their fieldwork topic, and their fieldwork advisor. Similarly, each student chooses where to live, how many meals to eat with the Program's dining arrangements and how many meals to eat with an Indian family or to cook oneself. In many respects the students are treated as research scholars, to which they generally respond with enthusiasm and high morale. For many students the year in India has been a decisive experience in their academic and personal lives.

Extension of the College Year in India Model to Nepal and Thailand:

Since 1980 the University of Wisconsin has launched two new study-abroad programs in the developing world—one in Nepal and the other in Thailand. Both programs adopted the format of the College Year in India, with a summer of intensive language training in Madison before departure and the three-component program overseas. Both the Nepal and the Thailand programs have subsequently revised their overseas formats to fit more effectively with their local environments. The fact that both programs adopted the Year-in-India model as a starting point and that both the programs have subsequently thrived suggests that the College Year in India model may have useful applications to other countries in the developing world.

Paper Three

Joe K. Fugate
Director of Foreign Study
Kalamazoo College

Hallmarks of Successful Programs in the Developing World: Academic Programs in Universities in Sub-Saharan Africa for Undergraduates

Kalamazoo College's Foreign Study Program in Africa began modestly in 1962, when a group of five Kalamazoo students went to Fourah Bay College at the University of Sierra Leone. Since then 450 American undergraduates have studied at eight African universities, east and west, urban and rural, Francophone and Anglophone.

We feel justifiably proud of these impressive figures, but they take on a different meaning when one considers that these 450 students account for a large percentage of all American undergraduates who have studied at African universities in the last two decades. Overall, as is well-known, less than five percent of Americans who study abroad do so in developing countries, which however account for three quarters of the world's population. Despite the renewed efforts in the last several years of several national groups including committees of CIEE and NAFSA to promote study in developing countries, response on the national level continues to remain discouraging. The current IIE guide to *U.S. College-Sponsored Programs Abroad* lists a total of five institutions in the U.S. that send students to African universities, and these numbers are small.

To put it bluntly, Africa has largely been ignored by American institutions when it comes to study abroad. Indeed, after more than twenty years of involvement in placing American students in Africa, I am still getting questions such as these: What, you are sending students to African universities? You mean there are universities there! What can an American student possibly learn in an African university? What is the curriculum? Regrettably, one hears some of these comments from colleagues and associates in higher education.

There are a number of essential factors for a successful program in Africa, some of which are, of course, applicable to study abroad programs anywhere. However, when one considers the unique problems of both personal and academic adaptation that confront the American undergraduate when studying in the African setting, these factors take on a new meaning and merit particular emphasis.

Careful selection and assignment of participants is probably the beginning of all wisdom for a successful program. Happily, a certain self-selection seems to take place. Our own process is rigorous, requires careful preparation, and has even been labeled by some potential participants as traumatic. There is a written application, followed by an intensive personal interview. There is nothing automatic about the procedure and in fact, we regularly turn down applicants when space is available. All of our experience supports the validity of this process. Both the individual's academic and personal qualifications must be taken into consideration, as the student will confront adjustment problems not present in other locations. General health is also very important, as there are varying degrees of health care available. On the whole, Africa is not the place for someone with a medical problem.

Once the decision has been made to accept the student, the particular assignment to a given program has to be seen in the context of *personal* and *academic* qualifications. For example, in Dakar a high level of proficiency in French is absolutely necessary. For some students there is a choice between a rural or an urban setting. The over-all GPA and the suitability of curriculum must also be considered before the final assignment is made.

From the very beginning we have considered an intensive orientation in preparation for the overseas experience an essential component in the success of a program. In Kalamazoo this takes place during the summer quarter, which is a regular term, as Kalamazoo operates on a year-round

basis. It is a requirement for students going on any program abroad, including those who wish to study in Africa. For two hours each week for ten weeks we run a general orientation for all students. At least half of these sessions are program specific, which means they deal with Africa in general or with the specific location to which the students will be going. In addition, we have an intensive on-campus African Studies Program consisting of films, lectures, performances, etc. with two events per week throughout the summer quarter. Attendance and participation in these programs are mandatory for students going to Africa. We further require formal enrollment in at least one Africa related course.

In our experience we have found that once one has made initial contact with the African university, it is essential to renew and expand these contacts on a continual basis. On-site visits are critical. Since Kalamazoo College does not send American program directors abroad, the program administrators make between one to three visits a year, depending on the individual location and the given year. Since January 1 of this year, I have made three trips to Africa.

The importance of a variety of local contacts cannot be stressed too much. These contacts range from the Vice Chancellor, to the faculty, to drivers, to domestic bursars, to workers; all sorts of people in a variety of functions and positions. Furthermore, there is a need to keep abreast of the local, political, economic, and educational situation in each center. Since the universities get their funds from the government, they are directly affected by the political/economic situation in the country. Here is a sampling of some of the items I always look at during an on-site visit: gasoline, its price and availability; power and water, are there interruptions in the service? food prices, so I always go to the market; the general morale of the people, so I talk to cab drivers, waiters and others with whom I have the opportunity to come in contact.

Since I have already noted that we have no American program directors, it has been important for us to develop an alternate support system for our students. Thus, in each university there is a contact or contacts to whom the students can turn for help and support. There is no general pattern, as this system has grown up organically in each individual location. It is obviously important that the students be familiar with these contacts and know where they can go for counsel, support and aid. Since someone from our office is always there to meet the students upon arrival and help them get settled, we make it a point to take the students around and introduce them to the appropriate people.

Whenever the validity of putting an American undergraduate in an African university is questioned, one can easily demonstrate that African universities provide the American student a variety of opportunities for academic and personal development. The curriculum offers subjects and approaches not available at home or, at the very least, it provides a setting which the home institution cannot duplicate. What better place would there be to study African religions than in Africa or marine biology at Fourah Bay College or anthropology in a rural African university? Foreign language acquisition is also a part of the experience. In Francophone Africa, Dakar for us, French is essential. Students have also received instruction and attained varying degrees of fluency in such languages as Wolof, Kpelle, Krio, Twi, and Swahili.

The experiences in Africa offer a whole range of important opportunities for personal growth and development. The university provides a setting from which a student ventures into a new culture, participates in a different system, comes into contact with different educational, political, and ethical concepts and expectations, and confronts a whole range of relationships never before encountered in the homeland. Insofar as it is possible, we hope that our students will have an African roommate. Eating in the dining hall at an African university is an experience in cultural and culinary adaptation and the economics of developing countries. For the White American, it is often the first experience that he or she will have as a very visible minority. The Black American experiences what it means to be in the majority and comes to a better understanding of his own history and heritage.

The long-term effects of the program in Africa have been very gratifying, though we have not sent students to Africa to train experts and specialists. We have always regarded study in Africa as an integral part of the Liberal Arts experience which should enrich the lives of the participants both academically and personally, regardless of career choices. Surprisingly, a large number of those students who have studied in Africa have maintained their interest in this continent and have gone on to become experts and specialists in some area which uses the knowledge and experiences acquired in Africa. Many have returned to Africa as members of the Peace Corps.

In conclusion I would like to add a few words from an administrative standpoint. Several years ago I gave a talk entitled, "The Joys and Sorrows of Administering Programs in Africa." Administratively, the programs in Africa are not for the faint-hearted. They require a disproportionate amount of time and energy. Communications, transportation, health care, visas, housing, food, all of those individual factors that play such an important role in any foreign study program present new and often frustrating challenges when dealing with Africa. At the same time, our experience has been that these programs provide students with unique personal and academic experiences that will influence their lives and mold their attitudes and opinions both as responsible citizens and potential experts. One of our former participants has written: "On a personal level, foreign study in Africa is important because it offers a vastly different experience from what most Americans have known in their lives. On a broader level, it's absolutely essential that a greater number of Americans understand economic, political, cultural aspects of third world nations, especially Africa."

Paper Four

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GLCA Latin America Program

Hallmarks of Successful Programs in the Developing World: The GLCA Latin America Program

The Great Lakes Colleges Association[1] (GLCA) Latin America Program was established in 1964 so undergraduate students, regardless of major, would have the opportunity to complete degree requirements while immersed in a Latin American culture. The development of this as well as the other GLCA international programs resulted from the GLCA's commitment to the study of non-Western cultures both on *and* off the campuses. In a proposal to the Ford Foundation, Eldon Johnson, president of the GLCA from 1961-66, wrote:

> "Our purpose is to go beyond individual college efforts and to take measures to assure an impact on our undergraduates which is impossible without the broader expectations of joint planning, the stimulation of a larger academic community, the contagion of shared experimentation, and the impetus of special funds."[2]

As a result of this commitment, a great deal of care and thought went into the Latin America Program's planning. It is to this that I attribute the continued success of the GLCA Latin America Program.

The proposal submitted to the GLCA in 1963 was intended to stand the test of time by providing a *framework* that would encompass the educational objectives of each of the 12 member institutions; synchronize the calendars and content of GLCA and Colombian educational institutions and resources; and not rely on one individual or campus for total support and guidance.

Colombia was selected as the host country only after Eldon Johnson and three colleagues researched and visited potential sites. During the summer of 1962, Professor Raymond Gorden (Sociology, Antioch College) and Enrique Romero-Yllades (Director of Antioch College's program in Guanajuato, Mexico) were challenged to design a study program in Colombia that would:

1. be self-supporting;
2. cost (including round-trip international transportation) not more than the same period of time at home campus;
3. include study and research opportunities for U.S. faculty;
4. provide extramural experiences for students, such as research and independent study projects, volunteer work, and field trips;
5. allow students to earn the same amount of credit toward their degrees as they would on their home campuses for the same length of time;
6. take into consideration existing Latin America study programs that were sponsored by member colleges;
7. be beneficial to both U.S. and Colombian nationals.

The Gorden-Romero team, after conducting intensive in-country research, recommended Bogotá as the site for the Program because of the number of academic, cultural, and recreational opportunities available to students. In order to meet the criteria drawn up by the GLCA, their detailed proposal divided the Program into three distinct stages.

Stage 1 (summer in Mexico) would be divided into beginning and intermediate levels. An intensive beginning Spanish language course would be required for students with little or no prior Spanish language study. The second section, aimed at students in the intermediate Spanish level, also required intensive language study and other courses relating to Latin America. Both groups would take "Understanding Latin America."

Stage 2 (fall in Bogotá) would require students to continue their language study and to take a comparative civilization course ("Comparación de las Americas) as well as two other courses offered by Colombian faculty at the GLCA center in Bogotá.

Stage 3 (spring in Bogotá) would allow students to select courses at one of three Colombian universities. The courses selected would depend upon the specific academic program of each student. Students who enrolled for spring-only were required to take Spanish language and the comparative civilization course in addition to university courses.

This structure encouraged students from all disciplines (except the biological and physical sciences) to participate regardless of prior language study. Since students were able to select from a full range of courses at the universities, general education requirements could be fulfilled as well as language and literature requirements. While the Gorden-Romero team strongly recommended that field trips, volunteer work, and independent research be an integral part of the program, they cautioned that they would be much more difficult to arrange in Colombia than in Europe. They must be handled with a great deal of sensitivity since many Colombians felt that "the 'hit and run visits' of the Americans would be more trouble to the Colombians than they were worth."[3]

They also recommended that the Latin America program be housed in a building not located at a university in order to:

1. minimize the inconvenience to Colombian universities by not overloading their facilities or trying to reconcile the different academic calendars;
2. increase educational and administrative efficiency by allowing the Latin America Program to house a specialized library that would supplement existing facilities, provide study and research space for students and visiting GLCA faculty, and provide sufficient office space that would be accessible to all students and faculty;
3. ease possible social and political issues by allowing the Latin America program to hire staff from various universities without involving the host institution in hiring or firing of faculty and staff, provide stability to the program so it could continue to operate in case the host institution suffered a student strike, and facilitate the incorporating of certain North American teaching methods into the Latin American courses;
4. assure that support services would be available to students during Stage 3, regardless of the university in which they were enrolled.

This building was subsequently named *Centro de Estudios Colombo-Americano* (CEUCA) and was approved by the Colombian educational authorities to teach courses to foreign students.

The Gorden-Romero team also recommended that the administration of the program be divided between Colombia and the United States. The Colombian administration would initially include a North American resident director, a Colombian assistant or co-director, and support staff. It was planned that the North American resident director would remain with the program for 2 or 3 years to set up the center, train faculty in U.S. teaching methods, and train the assistant or co-director to become the director. The U.S. administrative side of the program would have a coordinator in charge of promotion, student selection, procedures for crediting courses, program planning, etc.

That the Latin America Program has been able to operate within this framework for 22 years attests to the value of careful planning and research by experts in and natives of the geographical/cultural region in which the program is to be located. It also emphasizes the importance of considering cross-cultural issues (administration, orientation of students and staff, re-entry into the U.S., the impact of the program on the host institution and country, etc.) prior to initiating any program, especially one located in a "developing" country. The Gorden-Romero team, the GLCA Board and International Education Committee, and Antioch College (the Latin America Program's first agent college[4]), understood that students' needs would change as would the international political climate and the resources available in Colombia. The framework adopted for the GLCA Latin America program allowed for flexibility and growth.

The GLCA Latin America Program today is remarkably similar to the Latin America Program I attended in 1967 and yet, there are significant differences:

1. The summer intensive language program was transferred to Bogotá from Mexico in order to better utilize the physical plant in Bogotá.
2. The majority of the students of the 1970s and early 1980s enrolled in the Latin America Program for only one semester, rather than two as did the majority of students in the 1960s. Responding to the change in enrollment patterns, the Latin America Program began offering courses at CEUCA during the spring as well as fall semester. At the same time, single-semester students were permitted to enroll in a maximum of two courses away from CEUCA. Students could select from university courses, language courses taught at bi-national centers or independent studies that could be traditional research studies or of an experiential nature (studio art, for example). This trend, however, seems to be reversing itself as more students enroll in the Latin America Program for the academic year. Therefore, we have once again instituted Stage 3 of the original plan—students enrolling full-time in Colombian universities during spring semester.
3. The recommendation that students have "extramural" opportunities has always been the most difficult to fulfill. Students have been volunteering to work in social service areas for years. This began as a project in our course "Social Problems of Colombia" and evolved into something "everyone" did. Taking this one step further, we have now been able to develop non-paid internships for which students can earn the equivalent of 8 semester hours of credit.
4. The site director is a Colombian woman.
5. About ½ of the students are from non-GLCA member colleges.

In other words, the structure of the Latin America Program has remained constant, but programmatic changes have been made as needed.

From my perspective, the fundamental key to the success of the Latin America Program was the well researched proposal that provided a flexible country-specific framework for the Program. Of course, even the best plan will not succeed without continued planning and careful management. We have been fortunate in the guidance we have received from our agent colleges (Antioch College 1964-80; Kenyon College 1980-present), the GLCA central office, and from the Latin America Program Advisory Committee.

Let me close with some recommendations. I gave you a detailed history of the Latin America Program not so you could duplicate it, but so you could see the type of research, planning and management that went into its *development*. I urge you to consider the same issues the Gorden-Romero team considered as they developed the proposal for the Latin America Program.

I also recommend that as you develop study abroad programs in the "developing" world, you recognize the unique opportunities available in each country. There is no need to duplicate programs; in fact, it may be impossible. A type of program that is successful in England may not be appropriate in Colombia or Japan or Kenya. The GLCA, for example, offers many off-campus study opportunities, both domestic and international. Each one has a different focus and a different on-site structure.

I strongly encourage you to build into your program an in-country support system. Consider the care international students receive at your institutions — international student advisors who help with immigration, social, and academic adjustment concerns. U.S. students overseas deserve and need the same type of support and guidance. I have the utmost confidence in my in-country staff. In addition to handling the on-site portion of the Program, the director provides accurate information about current events from her perspective and from that of the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá.

In order to interpret the information provided by your on-site staff, the U.S. administrator must be knowledgeable about the region and have had first-hand experience in the host country. This person should also be fluent in the language of the country and travel regularly to the site. I could not respond to the many questions about Colombia — safety, political stability, families, etc. without having lived and studied in Colombia. In the summer of 1984, my secretary accompanied the students to Bogota and participated in our 4-week intensive language program. When she returned she was much more effective in talking to students, faculty, and parents about the realities of Colombia, of CEUCA, and international education.

Best of luck.

FOOTNOTES

1. The GLCA, a consortium of 12 liberal arts colleges in Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana, includes Albion College, Antioch College, Denison University, DePauw University, Earlham College, Hope College, Kalamazoo College, Kenyon College, Oberlin College, Ohio Wesleyan University, Wabash College, and the College of Wooster and was established in 1961.

2. Judith L. Elkin. *The Great Lakes Colleges Association Twenty-One Years of Cooperation in Higher Education.* Great Lakes Colleges Association: Ann Arbor, 1982, p. 17.

3. Raymond L. Gorden, *A Proposal for a Latin American Program,* July 1963, p. 21.

4. The GLCA college at which the program is located and which provides an administrative base for it. Each GLCA off-campus program has a different agent college.

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An Afterword

Study abroad, at its best, should lead to a sense of discovery—discovery of the world, discovery of one's own cultural roots, discovery of one's very self. By casting oneself into an alien setting, the emotions are jogged—indeed, they are assaulted—by the obvious differences all around. One is forced to cope with these differences in order to meet life's basic needs, and to cope requires knowledge, adaptive skills, and, let it be said, courage.

If traditional forms of study abroad are meaningful and exciting in these terms, study in the Third World is especially so. The fact that these countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America are so different from the United States poses a starker contrast with our familiar ways and thus a more striking challenge by which to understand our own society, values, assumptions, and larger world role. If living in the traditional European setting exposes one to new sights and smells, customs and unknowns, living in Third World countries—particularly in rural areas—exposes one to an even greater number and variety of experiences.

Speaking for an institution that sends some 250 Americans annually to Third World countries, we are mindful, to put it mildly, of the enormity of the challenge and the responsibility. As Paula Spier points out in her introduction to this volume, there is little agreement among the experts on the details of optimal Third World programming. Some feel it key to place students directly into host universities, much as if they were in the U.S., to allow a certain comparability of experience and feeling for their host country peers. Others, my own institution included, prefer to immerse students in the culture through homestay experiences, in both urban and rural areas, while meeting the unique academic needs of young Americans by setting up our own courses, drawing on host country faculty and professionals. Programs also differ in the degree to which they encourage guided independent study, through which students may develop their skills in coping with the larger world around them, as well as in the degree to which they rely on U.S. directors, or program monitors, to be available to help the students analyze what they are learning and experiencing overseas.

The challenge, of course, is not only academic and intellectual. It also bears on the health and safety of the students we send, on the professional ethics of assisting them in coping with the new and exotic, and on the diplomacy of working with host institutions and individuals in a fair and cooperative manner. Again, Spier has identified a number of common elements that contribute to success and constitute, notwithstanding divergences of other views, some agreed upon "hallmarks": a strong U.S. institutional support base; substantial knowledge and understanding of the overseas situation; a strong overseas support base; the need for flexibility and an open mind ("expect the unexpected" is our motto); careful student (and staff) selection, orientation, and language training; the need to facilitate access to Third World study for students (and their parents); the need for high standards, substantive relevance, and academic credit-worthiness.

Let us admit it: most of us engaged in study abroad from the United States have been, in Marshall McLuhan's words, "looking at history through a rearview mirror"—toward the sources of America's European past rather than our increasingly Third World future. This is not to say that study abroad in Europe has no more value—to the contrary. It is to say that in an increasingly interdependent world, in which more than three-quarters of the population lives in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the fact that we are sending fewer than five percent of Americans studying abroad to these areas is shortsighted, at best. The communications revolution has irretrievably linked the peoples of the Third World to us. U.S. economic dependence on Third World countries, as well as their's on us, is extensive and increasing, in the neighborhood of forty percent of U.S. imports and exports, with obvious implications for U.S. jobs and living standards. U.S. national security is also vitally affected by the Third World; all of the U.S. post-World War II military involvements have been in Third World settings. In important cultural and humanitarian terms,

our society has much to learn from and contribute to the societies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

For reasons of both educational philosophy and national need, we must increase the numbers of Americans studying in Third World countries. It goes without saying that we must also exert all possible efforts to optimize the quality of their learning while there. The discriminating program administrator, and the discriminating student, should be able to judge those programs that meet the shared criteria suggested here. Beyond this, we should not be too concerned over differences of view about what specific program approach is best or worst—the answer, in any case, will depend on the individual student and his or her own needs and preferences. Indeed, it is the strength of America to provide for such a diversity of approaches. We should build on that strength to better appreciate the strengths of the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and what we can learn, with their people, about discovery—discovery of their lives, cultures, accomplishments, challenges, and of our own.

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